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# REPORTS BY DIVISIONS AND GOVERNMENTS ON THE SITUATION IN THEIR REGIONS AND COUNTRIES AND ON THE PROGRESS MADE IN THE STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES SINCE THE FIFTH CONFERENCE

## Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names and its Activities, 1978-1992

Paper submitted by Canada**

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## Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names (CPCGN)

A national names authority has existed in Canada since 1897, when the original board was established to standardize geographical names and to advise federal departments on the spelling, use, origin and map application of geographical names. The CPCGN has continued to develop policies, principles and procedures relevant to the cartographic and linguistic treatment of geographical names and associated generic terminology. Since 1987, membership of the Committee has increased from 23 to 25. Statistics Canada became a member of the CPCGN, as did the chairperson of the newly formed Advisory Committee on Canadian Digital Toponymic Services. Representation continued from the ten provinces, two territories, and various federal departments involved with mapping, defence, archives, translation and Canada Lands.

## Meetings and advisory committees

Since 1987, the CPCGN has held its annual meetings in New Brunswick, Northwest Territories, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, and Alberta.

In 1988, the Commission de toponymie du Québec organized a French-language toponymy training course, with the collaboration of the CPCGN, and under the auspices of the United Nations.

Four CPCGN advisory committees have been active during the past five years, to provide advice on toponymy research, glaciological and alpine nomenclature, names of undersea and maritime features and, recently, on Canadian digital toponymic services. In addition, a working group met to start developing specifications for a concise gazetteer of Canada.

## Order in Council

A revised Order in Council had long been discussed. In 1990 this became a reality, P.C. 1990-529 replaced the previous Order in Council of 1969, and more accurately reflects the authority and responsibilities of provincial and territorial members. The new Order in Council also enabled the CPCGN to be chaired, for the first time, by an individual outside government. (Mr. Henri Dorion was appointed as Chair in May 1990, but unfortunately, owing to ill health, had to resign in November 1991 before the completion of his term of office. Mr. J. Hugh O'Donnell, a CPCGN member for Energy, Mines and Resources Canada, has been acting as Chair while a new Chair is appointed.

## Mission and goals

During 1989, the CPCGN undertook the development of a mission statement, a clarification of responsibilities, goals, and activities for a five-year time frame. Clearly CPCGN jurisdictions, whether or not they have their own names boards, look to the CPCGN as the national umbrella organization for toponymy in Canada, and to the CPCGN Secretariat as having responsibility to coordinate and guide geographical names activities for Canada at the national and international levels.

*CPCGN Mission statement*

*As the national body coordinating all matters affecting geographical nomenclature in Canada, the CPCGN has a technical role to record and to approve, through the jurisdictions of its members, names for official use, in accordance with general principles and standards developed by the Committee; and a socio-cultural role to preserve and disseminate information on the historical and cultural significance of Canada's toponyms. The CPCGN is also the body which represents Canada internationally in activities relating to toponymic standards and practices outside the jurisdiction of National Defence.*

Increasingly, the technical role of the CPCGN is being enhanced by its cultural and social roles as geographical names impact on the every day lives of Canadians through their sense of cultural tradition, and in their concepts of local, provincial, and national identity. Toponymy is an integral part of Canadian heritage and an aspect of our culture that must be preserved.

The major goals for the CPCGN were established and confirmed by members, as:

(1) Dissemination of accurate toponymic information

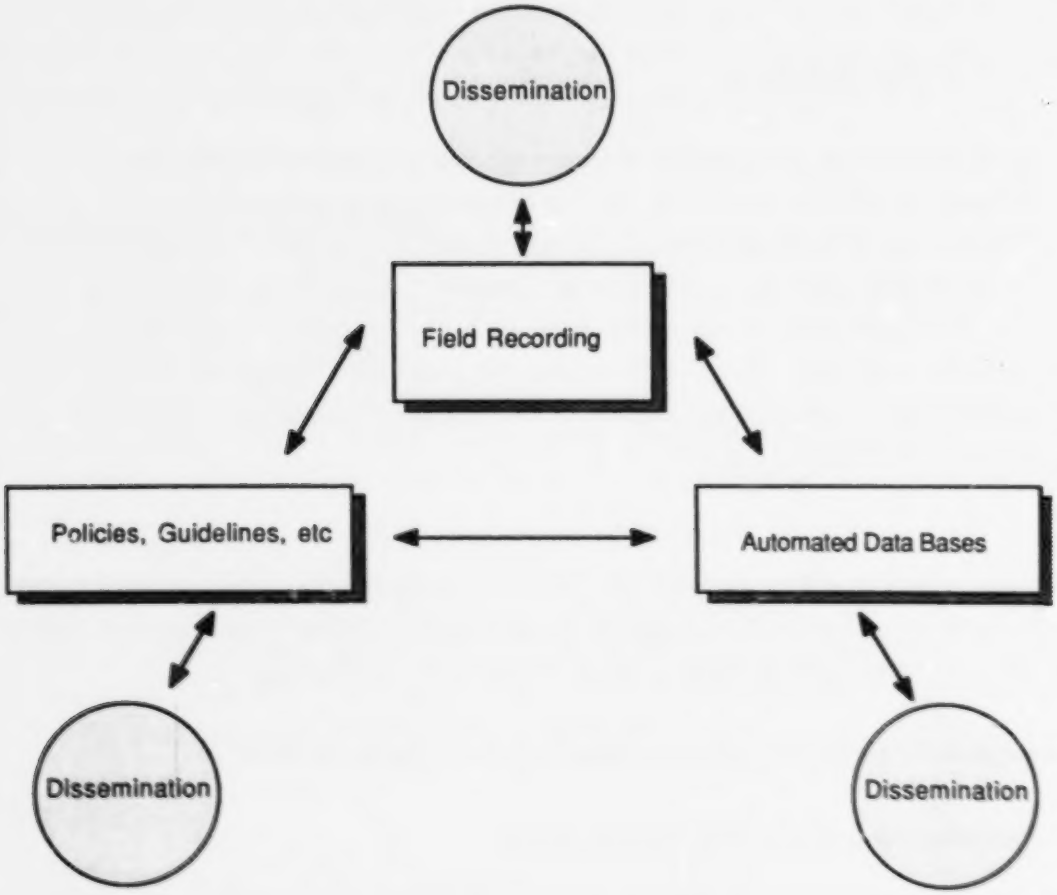
- to promote official name usage and to publicize the CPCGN and Canadian toponymy
- by publications, exhibits, educational packages, presentations, etc.

(2) Achievement of a basic level of field recording of geographical names across Canada

(3) Automation of toponymic data bases and assurance of availability of information in automated toponymic systems

- by improving and standardizing data fields and making data bases accessible through on-line access (at a minimum to all CPCGN members)

(4) Development of national policies, principles, standards, procedures and guidelines for the treatment of geographical names in the official languages of Canada, in aboriginal languages and in other languages (as needed).




These goals are interlinked and interdependent. However, basic *field recording* is the foundation stone upon which to build useful, accurate, unambiguous *toponymic data bases* for Canada, for use by government and the private sector in a wide variety of products. With names gathered in the field correctly reflecting the usage of English, French, indigenous and ethno-cultural groups in the country, *policies and guidelines* must be developed to give meaningful, consistent and authorized recognition of these names for cartographic and textual purposes, both inside and

outside Canada. Throughout the process of documenting our toponymic heritage, *dissemination* of clear, accurate information, both on the Committee, its principles and procedures, and on the geographical names of the country are of great importance. Only by making available the information recorded, processed and made official, is the Committee meeting the ongoing responsibilities of its technical and cultural roles as guardian of the toponymy of Canada.

## National programmes

In keeping with these goals various activities have been undertaken since 1987.

(1) Dissemination of information

At the national level a variety of publications have been completed:

- a revision (1990) of **Principles and procedures for geographical naming / Principes et directives pour la dénomination des noms de lieux**
- a brochure on published information available from CPCGN members' offices, **Toponymy - let's read about it! / La toponymie - ça se lit!** (1991)
- brochures for the public on making name proposals, **Naming Canada's geographical features**, and **La dénomination des entités géographiques du Canada** (1990)
- brochures for the public explaining the CPCGN and geographical naming, **Canada: geographical names and the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names**, and **Canada : les noms géographiques et le Comité permanent canadien des noms géographiques** (1990)
- a brochure about the Gazetteer of Canada series (1989 and 1991)
- **Gazetteer of Canada** series: revised hard copy volumes and microfiche for Alberta (1988), Ontario (1988), Yukon Territory (1988) and Prince Edward Island (1990)
- a compendium of papers presented by Canada at the Fifth United Nations Conference

on the Standardization of Geographical Names, held in Montréal in 1987 (published 1988)

- two issues per year of **CANOMA**, containing articles and policy developments in Canadian toponymy (also an index for articles in all seventeen volumes)

- collections of information papers on
  - toponymic data bases of Canada
  - features named in both official languages, and policies determining their use on maps and in texts

- information on the national toponymic data base, **Canadian Geographical Names Data Base: Records manual** and **Manual for read-only access to the Canadian Geographical Names Data Base**

Since 1987, the provincial, territorial and federal names jurisdictions have individually published many toponymic items, including information brochures - **Manitoba's geographical names**, **Geographical names in British Columbia**, and **Yukon Geographical Names Program** (plus a poster). The Commission de toponymie du Québec (CTQ) has produced a booklet about the structure and functioning of the Commission and a **Guide toponymique du Québec**; the Alberta Geographical Names Programme has printed (and revised in 1992) a **Geographical names manual** documenting the administration of the provincial programme. Canadian Parks Service published a booklet entitled **Toponymy and terminology used in the Canadian Parks Service**.

The Commission de toponymie has also published a **Supplément cumulatif** (1991) to the **Répertoire toponymique du Québec** (1987). Other publications document policy on commemorative designations, the naming of buildings, and geographical terminology of Quebec names. The CTQ also produces various newsletters and information brochures - **Le toponyme**; **Origine de**; and **TOPONYMIX**. (More details are available in the report **Bilan des activités de la Commission de toponymie du Québec, 1987-1992**.)

Dictionaries of geographical names are being prepared in Alberta and Quebec. Alberta has published the first two volumes of a four-volume work **Place names of Alberta**, and Quebec is finalizing their **Dictionnaire illustré des noms de lieux du Québec** for publication in 1993.

Through production of school games and a map exhibit (Alberta), open house for senior bureaucrats to understand toponymic programmes (British Columbia), publicity through the Canadian Legion (Saskatchewan), or contact with hunters and trappers (Newfoundland), CPCGN members are finding different ways to reach the public to promote the activities of names standardization.

In addition to published materials, CPCGN members have disseminated toponymic information through radio and television programmes; presentations to schools, interest groups, and office visitors; conference papers; etc. A current initiative of the CPCGN is the production of an 8-minute information video explaining Canada's geographical names activities. The video should be available by the end of September.

During 1990 we were pleased to host a group of regional parliamentarians of the Südtiroler Landtag from Bolzano/Bozen in Italy. They were interested in standardization of names, and particularly in Canadian treatment (federal and provincial) of names in minority languages in a bilingual, multicultural context.

(2) Field recording of geographical names

Undertaking field work has devolved to provincial and territorial authorities, as well as the private sector. Because of the costs involved, most government bodies have only been involved with programmes covering small land areas. However, since 1987, major projects have been completed to record names in the Keewatin District of the Northwest Territories. Intensive, community-based name recording has also been centred on various Inuit settlements of other parts of northern Canada.

Newfoundland has been active in annually extending the area of the province covered by field studies. In recent years, this has meant the addition of several thousand names to the official records.

Even though great strides forward have been made in the past five years, many parts of Canada still have a very low density of recorded names. In areas of native population many of the locally used names form part of a body of oral tradition which still remains to be documented before it is lost with the passing of today's elders, and the decline of many long-established traditions.

To keep track of advances made, the CPCGN is maintaining an index base map gridded by

1:50 000 scale map areas, to document the coverage of field work being undertaken in Canada.

During 1992, the CPCGN will be completing a field guide, **Guide to the field collection of native geographical names**, as a reference tool for all those involved in the collection of names in native communities.

(3) Automation of toponymic data bases and data availability

This aspect of CPCGN standardization activities has grown over the past five years. The Advisory Committee on Canadian Digital Toponymic Services was established and two studies have been completed: 1) A vision and recommendations for a Canadian digital toponymic service; and 2) A technical report on the treatment of syllabics and "hard-to-construct", or modified, extended Roman alphabet characters, as used in many of the languages of Canada's indigenous peoples. The advisory committee has made recommendations on core data fields for official toponyms to standardize federal and provincial/territorial data collection, and is now looking at technical issues of data exchange, as well as policy questions concerned with distribution of digital data.

Since 1987 the Canadian Geographical Names Data Base (formerly the National Toponymic Data Base) has been transferred onto a SUN-4 computer, and is managed with version 6.0 of ORACLE. ASCII substitutions for specific accented characters are no longer necessary now that data are stored using an 8-bit character set conforming to ISO 8859. Over 470 000 records for names of places and features in Canada are stored in the CGNDB. Some provinces and territories also maintain their own names records in a digital format (Quebec, Manitoba, Alberta) and others are in the process of downloading files for their own jurisdictions from the CGNDB (British Columbia, Northwest Territories).

Except for the official names of undersea features, which are stored separately on the Undersea Feature Names Data Base, all the names approved by individual members of the CPCGN will continue to be stored on the national data base. Although the CGNDB is available for read-only access to CPCGN members, efforts will be made in the near future to make the digital data more widely accessible on-line; to look into developing a more user-friendly system for public access; and to develop exchange of digital data between CPCGN members.

Several joint initiatives have been taken, for example, flagging records of all geographical names that are within particular national parks, and matching name records (in British Columbia and Saskatchewan) with detailed records of World War II casualties, after whom the features are

named. With Statistics Canada, work is in hand to match the Standard Geographic Codes associated with census records to the official geographical names stored on the Canadian Geographical Names Data Base. At least for incorporated places (i.e. municipalities) presently being verified, this will mean that standardized spellings will be used by Statistics Canada, and that a link will be established to population records through the CGNDB records keys. This will address user requirements and enhance the standardization process.

A future initiative will be the upgrade of coordinate references for place and feature locations to provide degrees, minutes, and also seconds, for latitude and longitude data fields. Also in the future, the CPCGN should be discussing the distribution of standardized (i.e. official names) in digital formats, such as CD-ROM.

Accuracy of data and maintenance of standardized names records for wide dissemination nationally and internationally will remain the aim of the CPCGN.

4) Development of national policies, principles, and guidelines in the official and aboriginal languages of Canada

In 1990 the revised edition of **Principles and procedures for geographical naming** was published. No major changes had been necessary, but information on abbreviations of the names of provinces was added, and some examples of principles, and contact addresses, were updated.

In the past five-year period Translation Bureau of Secretary of State has organized a working group to deal with details of the treatment of non-French-language official names in French-language texts. Although for many names translation of the generic term is appropriate, for names such as Lake on the Mountain, Rapids of the Drowned, or Bay of Islands, this approach does not necessarily provide an acceptable solution.

Of considerable significance to the CPCGN in recent years have been the efforts to develop policy for recording and using native geographical names. A sample study was undertaken in 1990 to assess response to the inclusion of names in a modified, extended Roman alphabet (as used in Athapaskan languages). Although there was much interest in this project, there was no clear cut opinion as to how closely an approved name for mapping should follow these languages, and whether or not generic terminology should be included in English or French, or whether a pronunciation guide should be included on the map.

At this time, all jurisdictions of the CPCGN are moving ahead carefully, and further discussions will be needed before a definite policy on native names can be formulated. To help provide background information the CPCGN is completing a bibliography of articles on Canadian native toponymy.

(The question of recording Inuktitut syllabic forms of names, or of representing standardized Athapaskan-language names on toponymic data bases is being addressed and was mentioned under goal 3 concerning data bases.)

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Use of official names

Names as officially approved by the CPCGN are used on federal maps, for example, on Energy, Mines and Resources products - National Topographic System (NTS) maps, 1:2M and smaller scale National Atlas products; and on Canadian Hydrographic Service, and National Defence map products. Efforts must be made in the coming years to increase the awareness in federal departments of official names sources and services, while still ensuring accurate names information continues to be supplied to the largest federal map producers.

The CPCGN has a working group looking at the content of a concise national gazetteer for Canada, a product which should be planned for hard copy and digital format distribution within the next five years.

Increasingly government departments and private industry are requesting Canadian digital toponymic information from the Canadian Geographical Names Data Base. The CPCGN members must, therefore, collaborate to maintain accurate, up-to-date names records so that standardized forms of names are those disseminated widely in today's digital environment.

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